BUT THAT SHARAKU WAS REAL!

HATE TO BREAK IT TO YA...

HUSH

CHAPTER 29: THE SOUND OF THE BELL AT GION (PART 3)

What ...?

The Sharaku...? was real?

ART BY ICHIHA AKIZUKI
WRITTEN BY MAI MOCHIZUKI
CHARACTER DESIGNS BY SHIZU YAMAUCHI

JUST KIDDIN'!

'SI
SNICKER

THAT WAS ONLY A JOKE.

MURMUR

MURMUR

A JOKE?!

THE SHARAKU WAS A COUNTERFEIT, PAINTED BY YOURS TRULY.

INDEED.

TCH...

YOU...

...FELL FOR IT, DIDN'T YOU?

YOU ASSHOLE!

DID I GET YOU TOO?

WHAT ABOUT YOU, HOLMES-HAN?

WELL?

I WANNA HEAR IT STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH.

THE WAY YOU FLINCHED WHEN I SAID IT WAS REAL...

YOUR EXPRES-SION WAS A MASTER-PIECE.

DID YOU THINK IT WAS REAL, EVEN JUST FOR A SECOND?

CLENCH

HMM...

PERHAPS I SHOULD BREAK THIS IMPUDENT HAND OF YOURS.

TSK

YOU'RE AS VIOLENT A CHILD AS EVER, I SEE.

I DON'T DOUBT FOR A MINUTE THAT YOU REALLY WOULD.

OH, COME NOW.

THAT WOULD HARDLY BE ENOUGH TO SATISFY ME RIGHT NOW.

I'M GOING TO EXPOSE EVERY ONE OF YOUR FORGERIES...

...AND FORCE YOU TO REALIZE THE FRUITLESSNESS OF YOUR ENDEAVORS.

A BOLD CLAIM AFTER THAT SHARAKU GAVE YOU SUCH A FRIGHT.

ALTHOUGH... IF I CAN SHAME YOU OUT OF THE APPRAISIN' BUSINESS,

I MIGHT CONSIDER QUITTIN' FORGERY.

THEN LEMME ASK YOU SOME-THIN'.

WHAT GAVE ME AWAY?

A BOLD CLAIM AFTER I JUST EXPOSED YOUR PAINTING.

I GET IT... THE EAR.

SHARAKU WAS A MYSTERIOUS ARTIST WHO VANISHED WITHOUT EVER REVEALING HIMSELF TO THE WORLD.

MAY I ASK WHY YOU CHOSE SHARAKU?

WHY...?

...WAS LIKE A CRY FROM YOUR SOUL, WASN'T IT?

SO CHOOSING SHARAKU...

A CRY...

...THAT YOU DESPERATELY WANTED ME TO HEAR.

GRAB

YA REALLY ARE ONE SMART-MOUTHED BRAT!

SNATCH

WHAT AN IMMATURE WAY TO REACT TO THE TRUTH...

THAT'S ENOUGH!

BOTH OF YOU!

THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE A PARTY!

AOI-SAN...

THE GAME'S OVER, ISN'T IT?!

SO LET'S WRAP THINGS UP!

ENSHO-SAN, PLEASE CLEAN UP YOUR MESS!

YOU GOT ME THERE.

FU FU FU CHUCKLE

I GIVE.

THE GAME'S OVER, SO I BEST CLEAN UP AFTER MYSELF.

BUT LEMME TELL YA SOMETHIN', HOLMES-HAN...

I REALLY DON'T LIKE YA.

SO MUCH I COULD JUST TEAR YA LIMB FROM LIMB.

FANCY THAT.

I WAS GOING TO SAY THE SAME THING.

NEXT TIME WE MEET, I REALLY WILL CRUSH YA.

CLAP

ALL RIGHT !

CLAP

MURMUR

MURMUR

WE ORDERED THESE FROM A RENOWNED SHOP,

SO I DO HOPE YOU ALL ENJOY THEM.

NOW THAT THE GAMES ARE OVER, IT'S TIME FOR DESSERT.

HUH?

WHERE'D HOLMES GO?

I'M NOT SURE,

BUT I THINK HE NEEDED SOME SPACE.

WH-WHAT?

...

I-I'M SURE HE WOULDN'T ...

I'M KINDA WORRIED HE'S GONE OFF TO BANG HIS HEAD AGAINST A WALL OR SOMETHING...

I MEAN, HE'S GOT A BIT OF A DEPRESSIVE STREAK.

...

AOI-SAN. AKIHITO-SAN.

HOLMES-SAN?

AOI-CHAN JUST THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE HITTING YOUR HEAD ON A WALL.

What?!

I DIDN'T SAY THAT!

IS SOME-THING THE MATTER?

YOU WERE WORRIED ABOUT ME, THEN?

GOOD...

THIS IS THE HOLMES-SAN I KNOW.

I WAS SIMPLY REFLECTING ON MY ACTIONS...

...SINCE YOU SCOLDED ME.

I D-DIDN'T SCOLD YOU!

W-WELL, IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO!

I THOUGHT YOU WERE GONNA GO, "STOP BEING MEAN TO HOLMES-SAN!"

BUT THEN YOU SAID, "THAT'S ENOUGH! BOTH OF YOU!"

I WASN'T REALLY THINKING.

I JUST WANTED TO STOP YOU...

"US"?

YOU GAVE US A MUCH NEEDED WAKEUP CALL.

YOU'RE ENTIRELY CORRECT, AOI-SAN.

IT'S LIKE HOW IDENTICAL POLES ON MAGNETS REPEL EACH OTHER.

WHENEVER WE SEE ONE ANOTHER, THE REACTION IS ALWAYS INTENSE.

I'M LOATHE TO ADMIT IT,

BUT ENSHO AND I ARE VERY SIMILAR.

THANK YOU FOR THAT.

SO YOU DID ME QUITE A FAVOR, AOI-SAN.

SPEAKING OF, YOU FROZE UP PRETTY BAD IN FRONT OF THAT SHARAKU PAINTING.

I SUPPOSE I DID...

MAN,

I THOUGHT YOU'D BE MORE DOWN THAN THIS.

I EXPOSED HIS FORGERY, SO I HAVE NO REASON TO BE DOWN.

MY ONLY REGRET IS MY CHILDISH BEHAVIOR.

I WON'T DENY THAT ENSHO HAS TRULY PRODIGIOUS ARTISTIC ABILITY.

JUST LIKE THE HUNT PAINTING.

IT WAS AN EXTREMELY WELL-CRAFTED FORGERY.

AND... THE EAR GAVE IT AWAY?

THE DIFFER-ENCE WAS IMMEDIATELY APPARENT.

NEVERTHELESS, MY GRANDFATHER HAS TAKEN ME TO SEE A GENUINE SHARAKU.

IT'S A DEFINING FEATURE OF HIS ART.

SHARAKU HAD A HABIT OF DRAWING EARS WITH FIVE STROKES.

THE LINES SEEMED FORCED, RATHER THAN DRAWN BY EFFORTLESS HABIT.

IT'S NOT THAT.

? ? ?

SO THE EAR IN HIS PAINTING DIDN'T HAVE FIVE STROKES?

AND THAT'S WHERE YOU COULD SEE ENSHO IN THE PAINTING?

PRECISELY.

SO WHEN HE SAID IT WAS REAL, IT REALLY DID RATTLE ME FOR A MOMENT...

THE PIECE WAS COMPELLING ENOUGH THAT I HESITATED TO DESTROY IT.

BUT EVEN SO...

PAINFUL THOUGH THAT IS TO ADMIT.

DIDN'T YOU ALSO SAY HE CHOSE SHARAKU FOR A REASON.

WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?

AS YOU KNOW, SHARAKU IS A MYSTERIOUS ARTIST WHO REMAINED ANONYMOUS.

BUT RECENT RESEARCH HAS SUGGESTED...

...THAT HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN A NOH ACTOR BY THE NAME OF SAITO JUROBEI.

NOH ACTORS WEREN'T ALLOWED TO HAVE SIDE JOBS, HENCE THE CONCEALMENT OF HIS IDENTITY.

...IS COMPLETELY FOREIGN TO OUR MODERN SENSIBILITIES.

SUCH A PROHIBITION ON SIDE JOBS...

THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT THE CONSEQUENCES WOULD HAVE BEEN IF HE WERE DISCOVERED.

YET IN SPITE OF THAT...

...HE CONTINUED TO PAINT IN SECRET.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS?

IT MEANS THAT'S JUST HOW BADLY HE WANTED TO PAINT.

DESPITE THE RISKS,

HE COULDN'T SUPPRESS THE ARTIST IN HIM.

THAT'S RIGHT.

NO MATTER THE ACCOLADES HIS WORK RECEIVED...

BUT THE THING IS...

SHARAKU COULD NEVER REVEAL HIS IDENTITY.

I'M SURE HE WANTED TO SHOUT THE TRUTH TO THE WORLD.

THAT MUST HAVE BEEN VERY, VERY HARD FOR HIM.

I'M THE ONE WHO PAINTED THESE!

IT WAS ME!

I DID THIS!

THAT HUNGER...

ME!

...HIS TRUE FEELINGS TO SURFACE.

AND I BELIEVE THOSE FEELINGS...

SHARAKU COULD NEVER ALLOW...

THE DESIRE TO BE SEEN...

IT WAS ALL ME!

THAT TERRIBLE LONGING...

...RESONATE WITH ENSHO THE COUNTER-FEITER.

I PAINTED THESE!

A FAIR QUESTION.

THEN WHY DOESN'T HE JUST QUIT THE COUNTERFEIT GAME...

...AND GO STRAIGHT LIKE YONEYAMA-CHI?

BUT... I THINK I UNDERSTAND HOW HE FEELS.

AND I'M BETTIN' HE WON'T BACK DOWN JUST YET.

OH, THAT SOUNDS GREAT!

I'D LOVE TO GO!

YOU SURE? IT'LL PROBABLY BE SUPER CROWDED...

NOW...

SHALL WE GO TO YASAKA FOR OUR FIRST SHRINE VISIT OF THE NEW YEAR?

HEY! I'M COMING TOO, DARN IT!

SURE!

SHALL WE, AOI-SAN?

YOU CAN STAY HERE THEN, AKIHITO-SAN.

YASAKA SHRINE AT NIGHT IS ENCHANTINGLY BEAUTIFUL.

DONNNG

DONNNG!!

DONNNG

DONNNG

DONNNG

DONNNG

DONNNG

00:00
JANUARY 1ST
1月1日〇曜日
IT'S OFFICIAL A NEW YEAR.
HAPPY NEW YEAR.
I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY HOW WE WOULD BE 'WITH YOU'...
BUT I WOULD ENCOURAGE SOME RESTRAINT.
MY RESOLUTION IS TO GIVE BOTH MY WORK AND MY PERSONAL LIFE MY ALL! YOU WITH ME?

LET ME SEE...

LAST YEAR WAS RATHER PATHETIC, SO I'D LIKE TO DO BETTER THIS YEAR.

HEY, DON'T BE MEAN.

WHAT'S YOUR RESOLUTION, HOLMES?

Y-YOU MEAN MY RESOLUTION?

HOW ABOUT YOU, AOI-CHAN?

I WANT TO DRINK HOLMES-SAN'S COFFEE BLACK.

UH... HMM...

OH!

TH-THIS YEAR, I'M GOING TO LEARN TO DRINK COFFEE WITHOUT ANYTHING IN IT!

HEH

I DUNNO IF THAT'S A REAL RESOLUTION.

D-DON'T LAUGH AT ME!

ARE YOU TRYING TO BECOME MORE OF AN ADULT, AOI-SAN?

Darn it!

NOT YOU TOO, HOLMES-SAN!

CHAPTER 29

END